

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.
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Royce Brier

Sec. Laird on Latin Revolts

"LAIRD DENIES U.S. Stir's Latin Revolts," says the headline, and the denial may bear a measure of truth, but it needs examining. The Defense Secretary was testifying before the House Appropriations Committee last March. There may have been reason to keep it under wraps for a few weeks, but almost six months seems another example of the Washington secrecy obsession. But that's an aside.

Mr. Laird said: "I think it is important to bear in mind that the military is the only cohesive group in many countries in Latin America . . . We have clear preference for free processes, but we deal with governments as they are."



True enough, but it will hardly satisfy many critics who maintain the United States has for years been precipitate in recognizing Latin American dictators when one establishes his power in a coup.

Laird thinks it was a mistake that Congress limited the Pentagon on sale of arms to Latin America (now \$150 million in aid budgets), because British and French arms salesmen merely fill the vacuum.

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THIS MAY BE beside the point, since the United States can hardly prevent small nations from acquiring European arms, either smuggled or legally purchased, only because it would prefer they buy our arms.

But this enters the domain of international ethics, and we have been arguing the ethics of our relations with Latin American disturbances for a century, and with the best of motives we have been burned many times, Cuba a sharp recent example.

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THE BURDEN OF the question lies in the overt acts of the American military in Latin American upheavals, and the foregoing headline reflects the problem in a Laird denial.

He said: "No part of the U.S. training given Latin American officers is in any way related to the overthrow of Latin American governments . . ."

Academically plausible — a Pentagon lieutenant-general finding himself in charge of a technological training course for a Latin American colonel, doesn't prod the colonel to overthrow his own ungrateful government, though he may not be disinterested if the colonel does just that.

The real catch in our time is the Central Intelligence Agency. This octopus espionage system nowhere employs its tentacles more assiduously than in Latin American capitals. It is a known fact that in several Central American governments facing revolt, the CIA has often been a controlling factor. It takes sides. It may bungle, and may not get what it wants, but it just goes back to the drawing board.

The CIA is not in Mr. Laird's jurisdiction, but advice and influence merge with Pentagon attitudes, and it can create situations which can back the Pentagon into a corner.

If congressmen had the wit to ask Mr. Laird about that, he might disclaim his jurisdiction, but should he answer it would be interesting, but don't think it would be released to the people very soon.

September 9, 1971

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6/24/98

South America Coups

CIA Master Plan Seen

By Thayer Waldo
Chronicle Foreign Service

Mexico City

The violent toppling of still another Bolivian regime is seen by knowledgeable sources here as part of a far-reaching movement, backed by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), to seize power in a total of six South American republics.

Although it has been officially denied, CIA money, training and advice was liberally given to the rebel strategists who master-minded overthrow of Bolivia's leftist President Juan Jose Torres.

Similar action is reportedly planned over the next 18 months in Peru, Argentina and Chile, probably in that order. In Uruguay and Colombia, it is felt that attempts will be made to achieve the goal through the ballot box, with force reserved as a last resort.

Because the Bolivian political situation has been chronically chaotic throughout its history — the latest coup was number 187 in 146 years of independence — that republic was given top priority on the international planners' timetable.

EX-PRESIDENTS

The "brain trust" of this sweeping Latin American scheme includes four former presidents of the countries involved — all but one also ousted from office — prominent Catholic church leaders and conservative officers in the armed services' commands of each nation.

Their common aim is to prevent spread of Soviet and Communist Chinese penetration in that area, following a sharp decline of United States influence in the past several years.

CIA collaboration was sought by Peru's ex-president, Fernando Belaunde Terry, with the consent of his colleagues in the movement. Although it remains to be clarified whether President Nixon was consulted personally, there can be no doubt that CIA Director Richard Helms got the green light at top administration level.

PARTIES

The plotters seek to establish center-left, non-Communist regimes within the respective countries, relying chiefly on the leaders and programs of Social Democrat or Christian Democrat parties.

However, since they must also count on the aid of military men who are in many cases extreme political rightists, personally ambitious, or both, success in attaining those ends is at best uncertain.

The Bolivian developments offer a clear case in point. Former president Victor Paz Estenssoro of that landlocked Andean republic, a moderate Socialist, is a "brain trust" member; the main purpose of the revolt there was to let him return from seven years' exile in Lima and take over the presidency again.

FALANGE

But Colonel Hugo Banzer, backed by the fascist-oriented Bolivian Falange, had himself sworn in as chief executive before Paz could set foot on home soil.

During Paz's two periods in office, his Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR) and the Falange were bitter foes. Although they joined forces to help topple Torres, a voluntary surrender of power by one to the other is now considered most unlikely.

Observers believe that similar frustrations are apt to

crop up in at least three of the other target republics. It is regarded as most probable in Argentina, where the planners hope to put ex-president Arturo Frondizi back in office and keep former dictator Juan Peron out.

Uruguay and Colombia, however, represent the greatest risks, for prime reliance in both countries is to be placed on the electoral process.

ELECTION

The Uruguayan constitution forbids two consecutive presidential terms, but supporters of President Jorge Pacheco Areco are pressing for an amendment which would let him run again in November — with the country's present "state of emergency" measures maintained during the balloting.

They reason that traditionally conservative farmers and cattlemen will join the business community in voting for Pacheco against Liber Sergegni, the fiery ex-general who wants to nationalize industry and banking. And police power under the emergency decree is expected to keep leftist demonstrators off the streets.

The gamble will be even greater in Colombia, where a 16-year "co-existence" pact between the republic's two major political parties runs out in 1974.

There the CIA has taken the initiative, insisting on support for independent leftist Alfonso Lopez Michelsen over the objections of many who wanted to back respected former president Alberto Lleras Camargo.

ROJAS

But the man to beat, everyone admits, is aging General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, who ruled Colombia with an iron fist for 4½ years during the 1950s. Exiled, then tried and condemned for malfeasance in office, Rojas won a supreme court reversal of his conviction and made a stunning comeback, almost win-

ning the presidency last year.

The CIA view is that the ex-dictator must be defeated at all costs, and the CIA picked Lopez because he would let himself be put in office via a coup, if necessary, while Lleras would not.

Last but by no means least is Chile. The Marxist government of President Salvador Allende was voted into power, whereas the Bolivian, Peruvian and Argentine regimes are all de facto. For that reason, Chile is last on the plotters schedule.

They believe that another year and a half of Allende's socialization program will have alienated enough Chileans to make his ouster from office both practical and popular.

Allende's immediate predecessor, Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei, would be the replacement. He, too, belongs to the international movement's "brain trust."

Well informed sources report that the CIA has committed a \$14 million fund to this six-nation project, with close to a million of it already spent in helping to finance the Bolivian rebels.

The CIA in Laos

THE SENATE HAS WRUNG from the Central Intelligence Agency a public admission that this cloak-and-dagger agency is sustaining a force of 30,000 irregulars in the secret war waged in Laos for so long. While the full extent of the role of the CIA is still unrevealed, such specific information that has now been put on the record is appalling.

Even the Senate itself cannot tell how many millions the CIA is spending, because much of the money is hidden in budgets of other agencies. It is indicated, however, the CIA used about \$135 million last year to train, pay and supervise the Laotian "volunteers," as well as a force of perhaps 4800 Thai recruits.

Senator Symington, who forced the disclosure as chairman of a Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee, believes the employment of Thai soldiers violates an antimercenary provision of the Defense Appropriations Act. "Not only are they breaking the law, but they intend to break it more," said the Senator.

IN 1962, THE TIMES OF LONDON first reported the CIA was dabbling in internal Laotian affairs, and since then there have been bits and dabs of information putting the CIA in an increasingly disenchanting role. The CIA admitted last year it had 1040 men there, but this seems meager for training and supervising an active fighting force of upwards of 30,000 men.

Senator Symington is intent on finding out whether the United States can organize, finance and help fight a war without officially acknowledging to Congress or the people. At the very least, he has already made a case for reining in the CIA. Its fumbling in the U-2 episode, its blundering in the Bay of Pigs, and now its activities in Laos, clearly state that the CIA should be confined to gathering and evaluating intelligence, and that it should be withdrawn from the field of military operations.

STATINTL

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By Royce Brion

CIA's Little Army From Thailand

FROM JERSEY, General Washington hired a schoolteacher named Nathan Hale to spy on the British in Manhattan. It was bad judgment. Hale had no experience in espionage, as he soon proved by being captured and hanged, to become an American immortal.

In the Civil War the government hired the Pinkerton outfit to set up an espionage system. It was never much good, but neither was the Confederate.

In World War II we set up a spy system in Switzerland, and after the war it was consolidated as Central Intelligence Agency. It has grown every year of the 26 since, encircling the globe with its tentacles, becoming a dense empire defying the President and the Congress to comprehend or control its global activities.



Excepting its frequent blunders, nobody knows or can discover what it is up to in a given time or place. Compared with it, Hoover's FBI is an open book.

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FOR FBI AGENTS are subject ultimately to court examination of their activities, which involve constitutional rights. CIA agents don't deal with those having constitutional rights, and nobody says how or why it disburses moneys voted to it by a generous and spellbound Congress.

Most CIA action naturally focuses on trouble areas abroad, Europe in general, Latin America, the Mediterranean and the Far East. Since we have been engaged for 20 years in Asian intrigue, half of that time in warfare with Asiatics, that is where the CIA sleuths and provocateurs congregate and conspire in this or that policy, which is removed from the hands of the President and the will of Congress.

This has become a savage and slippery maze of blind forces at work, which no extraneous power on earth can unravel.

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IT IS A PREPOSTEROUS and dangerous situation for the Americans, and bears no relation to their traditional integrity of purpose and responsibility.

Senator Chase of New Jersey, a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, said last week he has learned from government sources there are "4000-6000 Thai troops in Laos, and the United States is paying them through CIA."

He avers this is a violation of a congressional directive last year, prohibiting financing mercenaries in Laos except to help free POWs or facilitate American troop withdrawals. The committee is currently taking testimony from two aides recently in Indochina. The Senator said he wrote to Secretary of State Rogers about it a month ago, and has received no reply.

Then why not invite the Secretary to tell the committee what he knows about it, which might not be much, as there is no evidence Mr. Rogers talks to, CIA, or vice versa.

But congressmen enjoy complaining, and don't enjoy doing. If they enjoyed doing they would adopt a joint resolution calling for an audit of CIA expenditures over the past few years. The howling would be pitiful that this would uncover supersecret investigation abroad, and work untold harm to vital American "interest." Who say? Who knows if CIA conniving is beneficial or detrimental to vital American interests anywhere, since nobody has ever yielded an inkling of what it is all about?

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Royce Erier

CIA Mounts a Light Brigade

GENERALS GRANT and Lee both despised spies, and employed them sparingly, when at all. Both deplored warfare, but since their consciences required it, they tried to keep it straight, devoid of frills and delusions.

The present brass in the Pentagon manifestly dotes on frills and delusions. But it doesn't make, for successful generals.

The failure in Vietnam has to be laid at the door of the generals, since the three Presidents who commanded them make no pretense of military lore.

First the generals were deluded that with modern machine warfare they could zap the guerrilla warfare on its own jungle terrain. This raveled out in three delusory years, and the generals were whipped out of their boots at Tet. Then they convinced themselves and a President that massive airpower, about equal to that used against the Germans, would hack it. It didn't.

Meanwhile, the generals had for years been flirting with spies darting about like moths in the Indochina twilight.

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THEY HAD READY to hand a spy outfit, the Central Intelligence Agency.

It was founded in Switzerland in the big war, and it worked out fairly well, as our spies dealt with peoples like our own. So the CIA became a vested empire which survived and grew great in the Cold War.

But when its operations shifted from Europe to Asia, it pulled a series of goofs you wouldn't believe. The source of the goofs is plain: CIA was dealing with Asiatics, who don't think as we do, and who had ample reason to distrust the Man from the West, who had been swindling them, and their fathers and grandfathers for centuries.

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WITHOUT KNOWING the supersecret table of organization of CIA, you can see how it functions in Asia.

The regional managers of the young espionage wizards build a native Asiatic group to move on the "enemy," Communist or tribal, to counter enemy plans and action. They enlist the help of the local military when they can. But CIA is only a body of Washington detectives, untrained in strategy and tactics, but this doesn't stay their meddling. The result is nil, or furiously harmful fomentation, as any sensible army colonel with a gritty war to fight with GIs, will concede.

A UPI dispatch from Saigon yesterday: "Military sources today reported the arrival of 3000 Loatian hill tribesmen, led by American Central Intelligence agents, to harass North Vietnam troops in the Ho Chi Minh Trail complex."

Now, there is a soul-stirring harassment body if you ever heard of one. Half of them will go over to (or back to) the "enemy" at the drop of a cigarette package. How would a CIA battalion leader know what to do to close down a supply trail? These are the guys fighting our war, extricating us from our mess? Let's not be silly.

But it's impressive in the vast CIA hive in Washington, and it must be impressive in the Pentagon. Is it impressive to you, or to your boys mucking around out there? Not if you give it a moment of thought.

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